

**NRCG Operations Committee Meeting
September 21-22, 2005**

John Monzie, Larry Bush, Bill Cowin, Howard Carlson, Rick Hafenfeld, Doug Turman, Wally Bennett, Chuck Stanich, Mark Grant, Bob Gilman, Mark Romey, Colleen Finneman, Wayne Cook, Pat Nooney, Kathy Elzig, Bob Lippincott, Rick Kusico, Wayne Williams, Brett Ruby, Neil Nelson, George Weldon, Rory Laws, Dan Cassidy, Jack Kirkendall, Dave Larsen

Operations Committee Business

Charter Amendment for Chairperson Selection

As Stated in the NRCG Fire Operations Committee (FOC) the Chairperson will be selected from appointed Zone Representatives.

To accommodate this process the Operations Committee will use a rotation schedule. The schedule is based on the current list of zone reps. found in the existing Charter:

North Idaho
South Central MT
Central MT
Southwest MT
Northwest MT
Eastern MT
North Dakota

The new Chairperson will come from North Idaho for a two-year term. The Vice-Chairperson will be from South Central MT and will become the new Chair after the two-year term. Rotation for Chairperson will continue down the list.

New Operations Committee Chairperson is ***Mark Grant*** from N. Idaho until the zone meets to choose the candidate.

Additional Membership Recommendation

The FOC recommends that a Agency Administrator be added to the committee as a representative for Agency Administers.

Zone reps. need to identify potential interested Agency Administrators and bring the names to the next FOC meeting for selection if recommendation accepted by NRCG-BOD.

Additional Membership

Rick Hafenfeld will be the Liaison to the Aviation Committee and Incident Aviation Advisor.

Fire Operations Committee Task Forces

IMT Type 3 TF

A Task Force needs to be set up to develop a Strategic Plan for Type 3 IMT's in the NRGAs as tasked by NRCG-BOD. Representation on the task force will be a representative from each zone, smokejumper rep., IHC rep., and training center rep.. Need representation from State and Local government. Letter from NRCG-BOD as well as Management Considerations from the NR IMT3 Workshop will be guiding documents.

Jack Kirkendall (SW-MT zone) volunteered to Chair TF. Need to get names of reps. to Jack by Oct. 7.

Equipment/ Contract TF

A Task Force needs to be set up to interface with the Strategic Action Committee (SAC) and Equipment Committee. Representation on the task force will be a representative from the combined NI/ NW-MT zone, SW/ Central zone, E-MT/ ND zone, and two reps. from IMT's. Need representation from State and Local government.

Bob Lippencott (IMT rep.) volunteered to Chair TF, ***Dan Cassidy*** (NI/ NW-MT rep.), potential candidate for SW-MT/ Cent ***Bob McCray*** (Stanich will contact), potential candidates ***Bob Fry/ Ron Naber*** for E-MT/ ND zone and IMT rep. Need to get names of reps. to ***Mark Grant*** by Oct. 7.

TF will review Best Value Equipment Contract and will bring forward operations wants and needs.

Northern Rockies IMT's

Recommend to NRCG-BOD that the NRGAs maintain **2- IMT1's and 6-IMT2** for 2006.

NRGA needs Draw Down Plan. Gilman and Weldon will get expectations from NRCG-BOD and bring task back to the FOC.

IMT1

IMT1 IC's – Stanich; Bennett (recommend extend for another cycle, Bennett is willing), Sandman (request DNRC to extend Bob's availability).

Need to identify individuals interested and set them up for success. Recommend that several folks who have been through 520 get assignments and signed off as IMT2-IC then move into IMT1-Deputy IC (potential pool - Poncin, R. Williams).

IMT2

IMT2 IC's - Maybe **losing** 4 IMT2-IC's: Cowin; Specht; Carlson; Cook.

Potential **replacement pool**: Grant; Turman; Hientz; Kusicko; Svalberg; McNitt.

- Develop Strategic Plan on incorporating FUMT into IMT2's. **(IMT reps).**
Need to discuss potential **problems of State participation of Rx fire/ Fire Use.**

Agency Administrators receptive to help with availability of individuals on a case-by-case basis. FOC identify trainee list for Agency Administrators **(IMT reps.)**. Can get assistance from DRF (McAllister)

Re-evaluate the potential for 6 – IMT2 at February meeting (FOC).

AOBD – Hafenfeld will work with the aviation community to develop some non-traditional recommendations to deal with the lack of AOBD's on IMT2's

Team Equipment Needs

Suggests 2 satellite phones per team needed for initial set up.

Could also use cargo trailers to haul computer boxes, fax machines, etc. **(Gilman will explore)**

Type 2 Team Rotation Schedule

Issue with teams being in 2-hour call 2 weeks in a row. Look at options, i.e., closest IC; do not use closest IC - go with team that's up; when closest team goes out, 2nd team in 2-hour goes before the next one is moved up from the 8-hour call.

- **Develop rotation and spell out in the Team Operating Plan as to specifically how the rotation works with 6 teams in rotation. (NRCC and IMT reps).**

NIMO

Earliest Northern Rockies would see NIMO would be 3 years from now.

S420/S520

- ❑ IC's need to let the training coordinators/team coordinators know if they have someone who needs to go to 420/520. The list of training coordinators can be found on the NRCG web site. The coordinators will then send the list to Cunningham who in turn will give to the Ops Committee for prioritization.
- ❑ Training courses need to be held for the critical positions even if there are only a few folks that have put in for the class.
 - **Mark Grant will work with Neil Nelson looking at all critical shortage positions - finance, plans, logistics, SOF2.**
- ❑ The Ops Committee needs to identify what positions/courses are critical and let the Training Center know.
 - **Ops and training committees to staff out white paper to address alternate concept (field) to 420 exercises -- Wayne Cook and Howard Carlson will follow up on their connections regarding field S-420.**
 - **Identify future potential IC candidates**
 - **Mentor 520 candidates - '06 (Larsen/Benes) Bob Fry (if signed off); re-evaluate at February meeting**
 - **Goal is to get 2 deputies/trainees/T1 IMT**

Safety Officers Type 2 Bottleneck - Paul Fieldhouse

- ❑ The Northern Rockies had 140 requests for Safety Officers and filled 72.
- ❑ Safety Officer Type 2 (SOF2) continues to have a greater demand than supply.
- ❑ The increased focus on fireline safety issues as well as concerns about safety "accountability" have spurred a change in how SOF2s are used by IMTs
- ❑ SOF2 usage by teams has evolved from its original conception as primarily a team, administrative position to include frequent and regular service as a line resource – often 1 SOF2 per division.
- ❑ NRTC has held the S-404 course, for a full class (30+) yearly for 10 or more years
- ❑ Backlog of SOF2-T for S-420.
- ❑ Some teams will not use SOF3 on Type 2 and 1 incidents – quals/experience not peer to DIVS

Spring IMT Meeting - Kathy Elzig

- April 10-12, 2006 in Missoula at the Holiday Inn
- Command and General Staff
- Suggested topics:
 - appropriate management response
 - long term planning needs (LTANs)
 - communication issues -- radios (narrowband vs wideband)
 - National contract crew capability
 - agency administrator panel
 - impacts of 2006 budget
 - talk about nitty, gritty issues

2005 Season AAR

George Weldon – Operationally, things worked well. From FS side -- ISO organization does not have the capability to handle the fire situation; with financial resources moving to ABQ, and no longer having the local finance folks help on the ground, it is tough to buy food, etc. in these small towns; 2006 budget - not very promising. Teamwork, skills, making things work with additional barriers was very good.

Bob Gilman

- Sharing of resources which everyone benefited from
- Everyone worked well together
- Work was different than normal, different thinking, i.e. Signal Rock, Prospect
- Sharing of initial attack resources
- NICF did a good job of allocating helicopters and air tankers
- SEAT program appeared to be positive
- NYC fire departments, APHIS groups - incorporated into the Teams - folks learned a lot and were very appreciative of that
- Prioritization – used a new matrix using information from 209 as well as information passed along to Gilman, etc. If we would have used just the info on the 209 -- things may not have stacked up like they did - will bring this up again at the Team's meeting in April.
- Get a copy of your ratings to Kathy Elzig or Bob Gilman if you have not already done so.
- Coordinating severity worked better than another other years.
- BPA power line - need to have upfront conversations.

Smokejumpers - Wayne Williams

- Slightly below average year including Silver City.
- Sent more folks on Fire Use assignments than before.

Hotshots - Rory Laws

- A good year - most hit 5 assignments.
- Initial out of area dispatch took too long - found out receiving end makes the call as to whether crews fly or not - teams were not ready for the crews/transportation.

Fire Cache – Pat Nooney

- Average year.
- Short staffed – due to the FS business process re-engineering.
- 2006 budget will have an impact on inventory.
- No longer have old style jeans.
- New generation fire shelters are stocked.
- Visited the Signal Rock fire with a group who are building the 4th generation Cache inventory system.

Reports

NRCC Update - Kathy Elzig

- Assistant center manager is Gary Boyd leaving his position – Aviation Coordinator – still vacant. Will be advertised GS-462/8-9-10-11, Government-wide for 30 days
- Appeared to be a normal fire year -- competition for resources not like other years - were able to get most resources easily.

Native American Crews - Bill Cowin –

Suggests the NAC plan could also address ADs (behavior, disciplinary actions, etc) similar to standards and guidelines put out by the NRCG. There is difficulty in USDA implementing USDI disciplinary actions.

- **Bob Gilman will take this forward to Tom Corbin.**

Contract Crews - Mark Grant

NR hosts at least 6 contract crews. Seems to be reluctance to use them. Could be some residual from 2003. This year all contract crews got several assignments and received good reviews.

- **Presentation at team meeting as to capability of contract crews.**

Best Value Contract - Kevin Erickson



- ☐ Water trucks/tenders -- no such thing as water truck in Red Book - keep water truck for a few years but that will have to go away -- is this the direction we want to go? Yes, this way we will stick with national standards - have to give contractors time to build their equipment in that direction, hopefully by 2007

Equipment committee – Kevin Erickson

- ☐ 2 inspection classes last year; plan on having 2 classes again this spring.
- ☐ Continue to work on Best Value - especially the analysis end.
- ☐ Develop a couple of teams to provide overlap and oversight on Best Value inspections
- ☐ EaTIS - equipment and training inventory system - contractor's responsibility - also hope to have it populate ROSS.
- ☐ Is there a national effort to standardize Best Value Contract? FS directed to be Best Value by fire season 2006. No committees have been formed.
- ☐ Equipment Committee Meeting Oct. 12-13 in Bozeman.
- ☐ Understand operations folks are very busy, however, there is a need for truthful performance evaluations. A new performance evaluation specifically for equipment is being developed.

Aviation Committee Update - Rick Hafendorf

- ☐ Allen Edmonds/Rick Hafendorf co-chair Aviation Committee

- ☐ 2004 dealt with NMAC substitution of air tankers - monitored throughout summer
- ☐ Held a more formal meeting at the Northern Rockies aviation conference – was more of an organizational meeting
- ☐ take on tasks from NRCG BOD
- ☐ plan on holding spring meeting in February at NR aviation conference - a/c contracts, automated flight following, air tanker world, reporting back to NRCG BOD
- ☐ tasked by NRCG last year to get a list of all qualified and trainees by all agencies out to the dispatch centers and ICs - needs some work on getting trainees out

Central Montana Zone - Bret Ruby

- ☐ Northern part of zone below average year.

North Idaho Zone - Mark Grant

- ☐ North of I-90 a wet year; south of I-90 a dry year and still dry - still in fire season.
- ☐ CDC below average fire year - shipped a lot of folks out.
- ☐ Having a conference call next week to pick a new representative from the North Idaho zone.

Northwest Montana Zone - Mark Romey

- ☐ West of the Idaho line was wet; record ERCs - after the Camp 32 fire, activity slacked off a bit - average year.
- ☐ Started prescribed burning a couple weeks ago.
- ☐ USFS – Ron Hvizdak, FMO from Eureka and Steve Straley, AFMO from Troy retiring.
- ☐ DNRC - average year; a few bumps in restrictions process; great coordination between agencies; increased staffing on T2 helicopter; hiring aviation spec. in NW land office.

Southwest Montana Zone – Jack Kirkendall

- ☐ Average year for number of fires.
- ☐ Forests did not pick up until end of July - State early on in the year.
- ☐ Missoula Dispatch Center - 5 large fires; Bitterroot Dispatch Center - 4 large fires plus large WFU complex in coordination with R-4.
- ☐ Record breaking ERCs thru end of August.
- ☐ Bitterroot dispatch had several acting center managers - trying to develop a PD to fill the position.

NRCG BOD Update – Bob Gilman

- ☐ The BOD was happy with Team performance and getting T2 Incident Commanders trained.
- ☐ Need to develop a strategy to support the need for long-term planning (LTANs) on teams.

➤ **Wayne Cook assigned to develop strategic plan**

- ☐ Radio communications, i.e. narrowband vs. wideband, a national issue as well as Area issue. A task group is being formed to address issues. Recommend having an representative from the Ops Committee on this task group.
- ☐ Information - local units and incidents will handle most of the information; there may be only 1-2 information folks here at the AFD.
- ☐ DNRC is having issues with some dispatch centers.
- ☐ Best value contract – preparing a white paper regarding Government roles vs. contractor roles.
- ☐ All risk assignments - easy to dispatch when there is a Presidential Declaration - not so easy if there isn't.
- ☐ Predictive Services vacancy at end of this year - meteorologist retiring; what are the needs of the field and teams.
 - **Get feedback to Bob Gilman within the next couple of weeks**
- ☐ IMT meeting April 10 in Missoula at the Holiday Inn - Command and General staff only.
- ☐ Met with agency administrators - question came up as to how to eliminate barriers to get folks on Teams.
 - **Agency administrator tools – how can they help us get people on IMTs; what barriers need to be removed; -- get ideas to Bob Gilman**
- ☐ Bear Paw Trainee crew certified - as with any IHC, certification has to be done every year.
- ☐ Letter from BOD explaining due process in regard to the I-90 deployment. FS cannot release anything until the investigation is complete - trying to tie in concepts and foundation of the Pulaski conference.

Agency Administrator Update - George Weldon

- ☐ Agency Administrators very complimentary as to how the Geographic Area handled initial attack - really good work done by those on the ground.
- ☐ Complimented the T2 teams that came in with short teams which helped them accomplish their goals.
- ☐ Are very concerned about the contract issue.
- ☐ Handled information at the GACC appropriately.
- ☐ If you name request someone and have trouble getting them, the agency administrators will help with this

Katrina/Rita Update - Bob Gilman

- ☐ Draw down - do we still have 5 T2 teams - what can we offer up?
- ☐ Holes continue to be in both fire assignments as well as all risk.
- ☐ Carlson, Larsen and Benes available; North Idaho - maybe both
- ☐ 1039 extension? In effect for the BLM and NPS. Letter from WO FS 9/21/05 -- waiver to work only Katrina thru 12/31/05 -- limit of 400 employees and can fill in behind that employee that is being shipped out - letter states it will not affect their time - R-1 should follow up with letter

- ❑ If teams are having trouble getting FS folks to go, give the names to George Weldon who will go to the Regional Forester/Deputy Regional Forester who have offered to assist in helping with this issue.